

F.Y.I.

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OVERFAMILIARITY COMPROMISES SECURITY

Each day corrections staff, like police and other security personnel, face the challenges of providing adequate supervision to prisoners in a consistent, fair and professional manner.

The vast majority of department staff do an outstanding job maintaining security and interacting with offenders.

Regrettably, there are those individuals whose interaction with a prisoner crosses the line from professional duty to overfamiliarity.

When that happens, the safety and security of staff,

prisoners and the community can be seriously compromised.

Issues of overfamiliarity are not new and they are not unique to the Michigan prison system.

In a report on sexual violence in correctional facilities nationwide, the Department of Justice reported that 247 substantiated instances of staff sexual misconduct occurred in 2004.

“Michigan has nowhere near the number of incidences as some states when it comes to documented cases of overfamiliarity,” said

In state prisons nationwide in 2004, 69% of the victims of staff sexual misconduct were male, while 67% of the perpetrators were female.

—Dept. of Justice report



Director Patricia L. Caruso

Director Patricia L. Caruso. “But any case is a serious problem and cannot be tolerated.”

The recent events at Baraga Maximum Correctional Facility are one example of what can happen when staff cross the line with offenders. A facility food service worker assisted by a Corrections Officer aided in the escape of an inmate who was serving several life sentences.

In a plea agreement the former C/O was sentenced to seven years. The judge

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exceeded sentencing guidelines in the case because of the danger to society posed by the escaped prisoner. Her plea agreement dropped a second felony charge—officer voluntarily allowing a prisoner to escape—that could have brought a possible life sentence. The food service worker is currently serving in Wisconsin on charges of harboring a fugitive. She will face additional charges in Michigan upon her return.

“These two women put themselves, their co-workers and communities in two states at risk,” said Director Caruso. “We preach treating prisoners humanely, but it’s critically important to maintain control at all times.”

“Safety is every employee’s first responsibility and a violation of work rules that results in this type of misconduct will be dealt with severely,” said Director Caruso. “It sets the stage for the introduction of contraband, assault and, as we’ve seen here, escape.”

Every new employee with regular prisoner contact receives extensive training to help them recognize situations that could lead to a compromising situation with an offender.

“Through new employee training we have comprehensive coverage of what is considered inappropriate behavior,” said John Cordell, Curriculum Specialist in the Office of Training and Recruitment. “We reinforce the positive and appropriate interactions and behaviors that staff should have with prisoners throughout their entire training program.”

Overfamiliarity is defined as conversation, contact, or personal or business dealings between an offender and staff person that are not a part of the employee’s duties and are related to a personal relationship rather than a legitimate correctional purpose.

If the overfamiliarity involves sexual misconduct on the part of an employee, charges will include criminal prosecution for Criminal Sexual Conduct 2nd Degree. This felony carries a maximum 15-year sentence. Additional consequences to employees who engage in improper relations with offenders include civil liability, termination, peer disapproval, loss of trust and family repercussions along with registration as a sex offender.

“We will assist the Michigan State Police in any investigation and insist on prosecution of CSC in any instance of sexual misconduct on the part of a DOC employee,” said Director Caruso. “The department has a zero-tolerance policy and it will be enforced.”

It is essential that staff be vigilant to signs of manipulation by offenders.

“A significant part of the Department’s mission is to provide a safe, humane environment for offenders. Being aware of and taking steps to prevent inappropriate employee/offender relationships is part of your job. This includes monitoring your behavior and that of other employees.”

—John Cordell

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“Recognizing when behaviors of fellow staff members are not quite right is part of each employee’s responsibility,” said Cordell. “Talk with that staff person and if necessary take the next step and report the situation. It’s tough to report but when you do, you may be protecting yourself, your co-workers and prisoners.”

It’s also important to understand the consequences of not reporting an incident. Obviously assaults on staff and the introduction of contraband are two serious outcomes, but it is a violation of department work rules to have knowledge of inappropriate behavior on the part of another employee and not report it.

“We are not asking for staff to be disloyal to one another,” said Director Caruso. “We are asking them to take steps to protect one another in a situation that has gotten out of control. It is the responsibility of all staff to report a possible situation, and it is the responsibility of administration to listen and follow up.”

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ERT COMMEMORATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Kinross Complex Emergency Response Team (ERT) recently commemorated their 10th anniversary as a response unit. The current team is comprised of 35 members from Kinross Correctional Facility, Hiawatha Correctional Facility, Straits Correctional Facility and Chippewa Correctional Facility. The team originated in 1995 as one of four pilot projects throughout the state, and was one of the first teams in the MDOC to be certified.

Along with their duties at the facilities, the Kinross Complex ERT has served the local communities. It has been deployed for Operation Clean Sweep, and the search and recovery of lost hunters and a lost child in the Eastern U.P. The team was positioned at the Mackinac and International bridges, assisting both the U.S. Customs and the Border Patrol agencies during a recent escape from Baraga Maximum Correctional Facility.

“Each member brings a unique contribution to the ERT and that is why it operates as well as it does,” said ERT Commander, ADW MacLaren.

“I am proud of the team’s accomplishments,” added RPA James MacMeekin. “They are a positive group of individuals and provide a great example of the professionalism and outstanding service that exemplifies the standards of the Michigan Department of Corrections.”

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AGENT EARNS LIFESAVING AWARD

Agent Greg Urban of Macomb County Probation was awarded the Michigan Department of Corrections Lifesaving Award for his actions while on a routine home visit. Agent Urban knocked on the door of a probationer's residence. The probationer, whom Mr. Urban expected to be home, did not immediately come to the door. After knocking persistently, Mr. Urban awakened the probationer. As he opened the door, a strong odor of natural gas was released from the house and the probationer was observed to be drowsy and not fully alert.

Agent Urban entered the kitchen with the probationer and discovered the natural gas stove control knob was in the on position. The probationer was unaware that the gas was on. After turning off the gas, Agent Urban and the probationer opened windows and let the residence air out until no further gas odor was noted. Mr. Urban stayed with the probationer until he was fully alert.

"Agent Urban's persistence in knocking on the door and his astute attention to the details of the situation at hand may have saved the probationer's life," said Deputy Director Joan Yukins.

Mr. Urban began his MDOC career in 1989 as a Corrections Officer and was promoted in 1995 to Parole/Probation Officer in Wayne County.



Deputy Director Joan Yukins and Agent Greg Urban

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INVESTIGATOR CHARLES LEVENS SERVES AS DRILL SGT.



Absconder Recovery
Unit Investigator
Charles Levens

In May 2005 Region II Absconder Recovery Unit Investigator Charles Levens was called up to active duty to be a Drill Sergeant at Fort Benning, GA, preparing infantrymen for their tour of duty.

In addition to the intense training Investigator Levens provides to these new soldiers, he acts as the Apprehension Officer for his company working with families and other support persons to locate soldiers who are absent without leave.

Investigator Levens began his military career in 1988. He left active duty in 1991 and then joined the Michigan Army National Guard where he continued to serve as a medic. In 2003 Levens left the National Guard and joined the Army Reserves.

Levens is tentatively scheduled to return to his ARU duties in May 2006.

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LETR POLAR PLUNGES GROW IN 2006

The energizing growth and success of the Michigan Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) has provided the impetus for another expansion in the number of Polar Plunge sites. Nine sites throughout Michigan will offer a LETR Polar Plunge this winter.

One new site is Detroit's Belle Isle. The plunge has been approved as a sponsored *Super Bowl* event (*Super Bowl* is in Detroit on February 5). This means the Detroit Polar Plunge will be listed on all *Super Bowl* event itineraries.

"The Michigan LETR is excited to have this sponsored event, as the media exposure and increased public awareness about Special Olympics will reach a world-wide audience," said Kendall Snow, Classification Coordinator, Southern Michigan Correctional Facility and LETR co-director.

Last year's five plunges raised approximately \$55,000 and the goal for 2006 has been set at \$78,500. This year's nine sites are:

Feb. 4 - Detroit Plunge - Belle Isle
Feb. 11 - Muskegon Plunge - Camp Pandalouan
Feb. 12 - Lansing Plunge - Hawk Island County Park
Feb. 18 - Saginaw Plunge - Four Points Sheraton
Feb. 18 - Cheboygan Plunge - Burt Lake
Feb. 19 - Whitmore Lake Plunge - Harbor Cove Apt. Beach House
Feb. 19 - Grand Rapids Plunge - Reeds Lake
Feb. 25 - Belleville Plunge - Belleville Moose Lodge
Mar. 18 - Central U.P. Plunge - Gwinn



The LETR Polar Plunge events have been sweeping the state, with law enforcement and corrections personnel organizing new ones every year.

"Who would have thought we could generate so much money for Special Olympics by asking creatively-dressed corrections staff to jump in freezing water during the middle of winter," said Michael Marutiak, Department Manager, Special Alternative Incarceration and LETR Director. "Yet they love it. The DOC and LETR do far more than just running to help our Special Olympics program."

To register for a Polar Plunge, contact www.somi.org, or your worksite's LETR Team Captain. Registration is a minimum of \$50, with incentive items awarded for additional donations. Prizes are awarded for creative costumes, creative plunges and most recruited plungers.

"If you can't bring yourself to jump in the frigid water, come out anyway and cheer on those who can," said Marutiak. "There is always an after-plunge party to warm up and talk about a great charity, the LETR and Special Olympics."

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AGENT EARNS LIFESAVING AWARD



Agent Kimberly Bomar, Mecosta County Probation/Parole, was presented with a lifesaving award by Deputy Director Joan Yukins.

Agent Bomar performed CPR on a woman while vacationing in Porta Vallarta, Mexico in March 2005. The woman fell off a banana boat and was brought to shore unconscious and not breathing. Agent Bomar instructed another onlooker how to give breaths while she performed chest compressions. After approximately five minutes the woman began breathing on her own.

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Agent Kimberly Bomar and
Deputy Director Joan Yukins

TISM PROVIDES SERVICES TO STAFF



Rosanne Leland

Traumatic Incident Stress Management (TISM) provides support services to the State of Michigan work force who may have experienced and been impacted by a traumatic situation related to the workplace. Events such as violence, suicide, homicidal or accidental death or serious injury are examples of traumatic events.

The TISM team receives training on a regular basis and at the eleventh annual TISM inservice training the focus was on the importance of self-awareness related to TISM work as well as effective ways to deal with compassion fatigue, stress, and burn-out.

“It’s important to embrace a positive attitude and seek out consultation from either supervisors or co-workers when needed whether you are part of the TISM team or part of your work team,” said Rosanne Leland, MDOC TISM Coordinator. “This will help reduce stress and possibly prevent burn out.”

Under the leadership of the Employee Service Program, a certified traumatic incident response team provides assessment and interventions to assist employees in the aftermath of traumatic incidents. The team is comprised of mental health professionals and

peer support staff who volunteer to represent their departments.

There are currently 183 specially-trained TISM team members representing nine departments throughout the State of Michigan.

The Michigan Department of Corrections has 69 members, which is the largest team statewide. In 2005, 26 MDOC team members were involved in providing 36 departmental consultations and services.

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MDOC BLOOD DRIVES

A blood drive held at Alger Maximum Correctional Facility on December 8 collected 27 pints of blood for the American Red Cross.

The first quarterly blood drive at Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility (MTU) was sponsored by MTU and Ionia Maximum Correctional Facility (ICF). Donors came from ICF, MTU and Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility. The facilities surpassed the goal of 35 donors set by the American Red Cross. The group had 53 presenting to donate and collected a total of 50 productive units.

On December 9, 44 Thumb Correctional Facility staff participated in a blood drive for the American Red Cross. A total of 39 units of blood were donated. Twenty-seven staff were first time donors.

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Thumb Correctional Facility staff roll up their sleeves.

ADW NICHOLLS ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION



ADW Evelyn Nicholls

ADW Evelyn Nicholls, of Camp Kitwen has been elected to serve as President of the Upper Peninsula Criminal Justice Association (UPCJA) for 2006.

The UPCJA brings together Law Enforcement and Corrections staff from

across the UP for unique programs.

The organization also hosts the annual UP Pistol Tournament at the Marquette Branch Prison every August.

ADW Nicholls, a 25-year veteran with the MDOC,

was an Inspector at the Marquette Branch Prison for 15 years.

In addition, she has co-organized and hosted the annual UP Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice Administrators conference held in Gladstone for the past seven years. **F.Y.I.**

MORE HOLIDAY GIVING



Each year during the holiday season, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility human resource staff puts up a holiday tree and encourages staff to donate hats, mittens, gloves, scarves and boots for one of many charities in Jackson and the surrounding areas. This year the collection went to the Jackson Interfaith Shelter. **F.Y.I.**

Representing the G. Robert Cotton Facility
FRONT ROW: Amber Milloy, Personnel Management Assistant; Tammy Berry, Personnel Management Assistant; Sue Butler, Departmental Technician Records; **BACK ROW:** Jeffrey Morris, Corrections Officer; Bill Mariefeld, Hearings Investigator; and Ken Ryan, Resident Unit Manager.

Chippewa and Straits adopt families

Chippewa and Straits correctional facilities teamed up with the Department of Human Services (DHS) by joining in the Holiday Spirit Project 2005 coordinated through the DHS. The DHS Community Resource Coordinator provided to Chippewa and Straits the names of a few families who needed some extra help. Those families were adopted by the employees for the 2005 holiday season. Gifts were purchased, wrapped and delivered directly to the families. Approximately \$1500 was donated by URF/KTF staff this season. **F.Y.I.**

Southern Michigan Correctional Facility collects Toys and food for family

Employees at the Southern Michigan Correctional Facility collected toys and clothing as well as purchased several weeks worth of groceries for a family identified by the Salvation Army. In addition, the facility collected gifts for the Toys for Tots program. **F.Y.I.**

Newberry staff participate in giving tree program

Newberry Correctional Facility participated in their 9th Annual Giving Tree program. The Giving Tree recipients come from "Strong Families/Safe Children," which is a 'Family Support Program' that works with high risk, low income families. The adult gift requests come from the Department of Human Services **F.Y.I.**